

## THE WRITER AT HOME

Sitting here at my desk trying  
to write feeling low down Poems  
keep coming back in the mail can't  
think how to finish the story I'm  
writing got three other stories and a  
dozen poems still out there for  
weeks now on strangers' desks When  
here comes Blythe holds out  
an envelope "To Dad" scrawled in  
crayon I open it up and Christ  
it's full of colored hearts and crazy  
rainbows I see she's been working too  
So I get the tape and we put  
them all up on walls corkboard  
printer computer file drawers After  
we're done I tell her I'll write  
a poem about this and give it to  
her She says "No thanks Dad" Well o.k.  
I'm used to that attitude but at least  
now I have colors around me again.

## THE KID BELIEVES IN MANAGEMENT

he hasn't spent time with the big boys  
never been to a company party seen the  
top man expansive surrounded by VPs never  
noticed that outer circle the young execs  
hustlers suck-ups hovering seeking eye contact  
pretending they like it never checked out  
the old strivers earnest aging wondering  
have they peaked and all those company  
wives well-coached always knowing  
who to flatter flirt with snub yeah  
the kid believes and maybe  
someday he'll astonish us all  
make himself successful  
or something

## EARL RECONSIDERS HIS VIEWS ON ISRAEL

Had this girl in Starkville, green-eyed  
blonde, my first one, only one, face like an  
angel and an ass to match. We were doin' just  
fine until this rag-head kinda A-rab  
boy from the college, had a loaded  
Chevy van? he started sniffin' around on the  
sly, said he'd treat her like a



desert queen or some-such crap, and after  
that I never got a word in edge-ways.  
I don't know why I never hit him.

I saw that boy a week ago downtown,  
talkin' to some other kinda A-rab  
lookin' guys, talkin' English like  
they didn't care who heard 'em. He  
was tellin' all his buddies about  
some girl he knew, said she  
let him "fock her in the ozz," and  
I've been wonderin' ever since.

## BE BRAVE

You have to because we all know it isn't easy huh?  
Writing this stuff and sending it out god knows when  
you'll see it again Sending it to people who if you  
knew them you might not even give the time of day But  
here you're giving them a piece of your soul Waiting  
for their decision like a little kid in trouble

And the postman — god! Ever think of him? Probably  
wonders what the hell he's got here Maybe he thinks  
you're some kind of revolutionary You hope you are  
Maybe he thinks you're queer or something Well maybe  
you are in one way or another so what? Maybe he  
doesn't even look at the mail you send Doesn't know  
or care what you do

But then maybe he pays some  
attention thinks writers are smart Maybe he's got  
some things of his own he wishes he knew how to  
explain on paper Like the woman who came to the door  
naked Or the time he maced that pit bull blind but  
it kept on coming tried to chew a tire off his jeep  
Or the time he gave CPR to the old gripe-ass  
who never tipped on Christmas etc etc etc

But I'm way out of line here All I really mean to say  
is keep sending it out Probably best not to care about  
the postman Just be brave because somebody's got to and  
if it was easy everybody would be doing it Postmen  
would be poets and all the poets would just be  
sending poems and reviews to each other  
Which come to think of it is pretty much how it is now  
anyway

— Michael R. Battram

Evansville IN